

Penn Dixie Dig with the Experts Economic Impact Report

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INTRODUCTION

The Hamburg Natural History Society is a non-profit organization based in Hamburg, New York. The Society operates the Penn Dixie Site, a place where individuals and families can come and dig for Devonian Age fossils.

This report presents the results of participants of the Dig with the Experts program held on May 21, 2016 (Fig. 1). The dig has been held annually since 2003. This survey, the first of its kind for Penn Dixie, was done to assess the economic impact of the event on the local area as well as feedback to improve future events.

Approximately one hundred sixty five people attended the event. The survey was distributed while participants were digging. If participants were in groups, one person in the group was asked to fill out the economic information while the others were asked to give feedback on the event. This was done to give a more accurate number for total economic impact.



Figure 1. Fossil hunters search through piles of freshly excavated rock at the Dig with the Experts program.

RESULTS

Of the participants who were given a survey, seventy three returned their survey. This resulted in a one hundred percent response rate. Of these, thirty one responded they were from states outside of New York, such as Wisconsin, Rhode Island, and Colorado. Eight were from Canada and nineteen were from New York but did not live in the eight county area of Western New York. Ten said they were from Western New York. Five did not specify where they were from, but indicated expenses on travel and accommodations.

Most (58%) of those surveyed said it was their first or second time at the Penn Dixie site. Twenty nine responded that it was their first time visiting the site. Twenty participants (27%) said that they attended 5 or more times. Of those twenty, twelve (16%) came from Western New

York or New York State, five (7%) came from outside New York, one was from Canada and two did not respond to the question, but did indicate expenses on travel. This shows continuing support for Penn Dixie and the surrounding area.

The total amount spent by survey participants totaled \$16,516 with expenditures averaging \$226.24. Those surveyed indicated they spent \$4,267 on traveling to the event, \$1,235 at the event, \$7,291 on accommodations, and \$3,723 outside the event. We can conclude, since about half of those who attended the event were surveyed, that total economic impact was over \$30,000.

Feedback about the event was measured through a series of statements which respondents indicated whether they strongly agree, agree, disagree, or strongly disagree (Fig. 2). Responses were converted: Strongly agree = 4, Agree = 3, Disagree = 2, and Strongly disagree = 1.

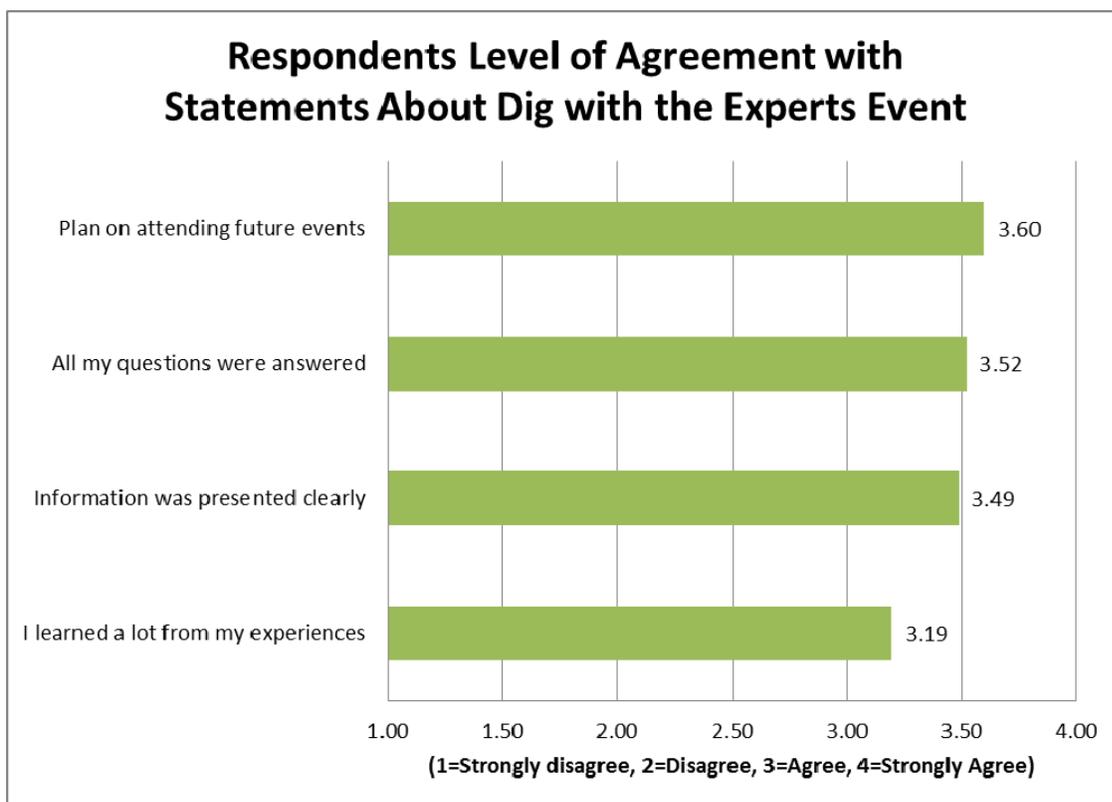


Figure 2. Results from Dig with the Experts visitor feedback survey.

Each statement has an average score over 3, which translates to a response between agree and strongly agree. The statement “I plan on attending future events” had the highest level of agreement, with 3.6, indicating that most respondents will come back for future events.

CONCLUSION

The Dig with the Experts Event was a success for Penn Dixie and the surrounding area, with attendees coming from across the United States, as well as Canada. Over \$16,000 was spent on attending the event and in the area. Respondents indicated that the event helped them understand more about the Devonian Age fossils discovered at the site.